

(c) the reasons for occurrence of same or the other problem and possibility of occurrence of accidents in Bina-Vidisha section;

(d) the details of the last accident that occurred on this section and the gravity of that accident; and

(e) the action taken by the Central Railway in order to improve the position of rail lines in this section?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Only one case of suspected removal of fish plates occurred in Bina-Vidisha Section in Madhya Pradesh during the last four months.

(b) to (d) On 16.6.97 at about 1.35 hrs. engine and 13 coaches of train No. 2723Dn. Andhra Pradesh Express, derailed at K.M.No. 953/2-14 between Mandi Bamora and Kalhar Stations in Bina-Vidisha Section resulting in injury to 13 passengers. Civil Police, Pathari has registered a case on Crime No. 55/97 u/s 150 Railway Act and u/s 337 IPC on 16.6.97. The case is under investigation.

(e) A drive has been launched on Central Railway for welding of fish plated joint in a welded territory.

Natural Calamities

3530. SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) the parts of the country which were hit by the earthquake and where incidents of other natural calamities occurred in the year 1996-97 and 1997-98 so far;

(b) the extent of damage caused by these earthquakes and other natural calamities along with the nature of damage suffered; and

(c) the nature of assistance provided to compensate the victims of earthquakes in Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) The State Governments have reported the position for the year 1996-97 as follows:

(i) Heavy rains and floods affected parts of 21 States (Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Sikkim) and the Union Territory of Pondicherry.

(ii) Cyclones affected the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Maharashtra and Gujarat; and

(iii) Parts of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra were affected by drought.

The information in respect of 1997-98, so far, has been reported as follows :

(i) Parts of 13 States (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Punjab) have been affected by heavy rains and floods.

(ii) Parts of 5 states (Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh) were affected by hailstorms.

(iii) Jabalpur and adjoining areas of Madhya Pradesh, Parts of Himachal Pradesh and North East have been affected by moderate earthquakes.

(b) A Statement indicating the extent of damage due to various natural calamities during 1996-97 and 1997-98 so far, is given below :

Sl. No.	Damage	1996-97	1997-98
1.	Loss of Human lives	3789	844
2.	Loss of Animals (in lakhs)	2.06	0.15
3.	Population affected (in lakhs)	550.00	212.00
4.	Houses/Huts damaged (in lakhs)	23.68	4.40
5.	Cropped area affected (in lakh hectares)	130.00	27.89

(c) Government of India has released Rs. 40.42 crores to the Government of Madhya Pradesh during 1997-98 as the Central share of the Calamity Relief Fund for relief and rehabilitation measures in the wake of natural calamities. Rs. 45.26 crores were also released from the National Fund for Calamity Relief for relief and rehabilitation measures in the wake of the earthquake of May, 1997.

Reserved Posts

3531. SHRI N.J. RATHWA : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of appointments made in the departments/undertakings under his Ministry during the last three years, category-wise;

(b) the post-wise number of candidates belonging to the Scheduled Castes/Tribes among them;

(c) whether some posts reserved for Scheduled Castes/Tribes have been lying vacant in the departments/undertakings under his Ministry at present;

(d) if so, the details thereof, post-wise;

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the government to fill up the said reserved posts;

(f) the time by which these posts are likely to be filled up; and

(g) the reasons for the delay in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) to (g) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

VSNL Deregulation

3532. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Swedish firm may gain from VSNL deregulation" appearing in "The Observer of Business and Politics", New Delhi dated July 18, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news-item is a despatch from Stockholm by one Mr. Alford de Tavares. The author has quoted extensively the views expressed by officers of Swedish Ministry of Trade, Ericsson (Swedish Telecom Giant), some Economic analysts and the Swedish Economic daily. The news item is based on the author's perception of VSNL status as one of the Navratnas and his anticipation of the course of future development/expansion of VSNL in the area of international telephone traffic.

(c) Since the views expressed in the Press Report reflect only the author's perception of boost to business interests of Swedish firms in India, including that of Ericsson following grant of Navratna status to VSNL; it does not call for any specific Govt. reaction.

Utilization of Resources for Rural Development

3533. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a shortfall in the utilisation of resources for providing self-employment opportunities to the educated unemployed weaker sections of the society;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Planning Commission has suggested for setting up of a high level Committee to evaluate the adequacy of the administrative arrangements for rural development; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to ensure full utilisation of resources in that regard?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPU YERRANNAIDU) : (a) and (b) Statistics regarding the utilisation of funds for educated unemployed weaker sections of the society is not monitored separately by the Ministry.

(c) and (d) A committee was set up by the Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of Prof. S.R. Hashim, Member, Planning Commission, to review and rationalise the various Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Poverty Alleviation and Employment generation. The committee has submitted its report.

HPT and LPT in West Bengal

3534. SHRI MEHBOOB ZAHEDI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of HPT and LPT presently functioning in West Bengal, location-wise;

(b) the present area of their operation and coverage and the future plan of action for strengthening and modernising these transmitters;

(c) the number of Doordarshan Kendras functioning in the State;

(d) whether there is any plan to modernise these Kendras;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) 6 HPTs, 20 LPTs and 2 VLPTs are presently functioning in the State of West Bengal as per location-wise details given in the Statement enclosed.

(b) While TV service is presently available to an estimated 96.0% population and 95.4% area of the State, cent percent coverage, both area-wise and population-wise is expected to be achieved on commissioning of 5 HPT and 3 LPT/VLPT projects presently under implementation/envisaged to be set up in the State of West Bengal.

(c) to (f) While TV Studios for DD-I and DD-II at Doordarshan Kendra, Calcutta and an interim Studio set up at Shantiniketan are presently functioning in West Bengal, Studio Centre at Jalpaiguri is technically ready and would be commissioned on sanction of staff by the competent authority. Studio (permanent set-up) at Shantiniketan is also presently under implementation. Augmentation/modernisation of Doordarshan Kendras by way of replacement of old equipment and introduction of new technology is a continuous activity taken up from time to time according to requirements of the particular Kendras.